

10/22/2023

House Judiciary Committee  
124 North Capitol Drive  
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Chair Breem Chair Day, Vice Chair Edwards, Vice Chair Barber and members of the committee,

I write this letter in strong support of the Michigan Family Protection Act.

My name is Emily Murray Joseph, and I live in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I am writing this letter in support of this Michigan Family Protection Act as a previous gestational carrier. In March 2022, I began the process of being a surrogate, and one year later, I gave birth to my dear friend's baby in March 2023. The entire process was one of the most beautiful things I have ever had the pleasure and privilege to be a part of - with the exception of the legal barriers to my dear friends, Rachael and Alex, as I was named and treated as the legal parents of their long-awaited baby girl. Rachael was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 26 and waited four and a half years to finally hold her baby girl, after being unable to carry the baby herself due to her cancer treatments. Due to the 1988 Surrogate Parenting Act, which makes it illegal to do a surrogacy contract in Michigan, and living in Kent County (where they could not obtain a pre-birth order), Rachael and Alex are not yet legal parents to their now 7 month old daughter. They are in the process of adopting her. The last 18 months have been extremely difficult for them, as they navigate the legalities of adopting their own child, something that could have been avoided if the current bill were in place, supporting families like theirs.

The Michigan Family Protection Act would ensure that other Michigan families do not have to go through the difficult process of being denied parentage if their child is born via surrogacy. This bill will update Michigan's parentage statutes, ensuring that all children in Michigan have access to a legal parent-child relationship, no matter how they are born. Based on the Uniform Parentage Act of 2017, the Michigan Family Protection Act has been crafted by leading experts in parentage law to meet the needs of children and families. The bill will ensure that our state's laws remain constitutional, reflects best practices, and protects all children in Michigan.

I hope you will report the Michigan Family Protection Act favorably out of committee, and consider the needs of the intended parents and gestational carriers when making your decision. It will change their lives.

Sincerely,

Emily Murray Joseph  
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